

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 603

By Halford

A RESOLUTION relative to wild bobwhite quail, the official gamebird of the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, sixty years ago, Tennessee had a wild bobwhite quail population of approximately two million birds; today, that population is down to approximately 150,000; and

WHEREAS, wild bobwhite quail populations are now extinct in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey and virtually extinct in Maryland, Delaware, and Ohio; and

WHEREAS, over the past sixty years, wild bobwhite quail numbers, east of the Mississippi River, have declined by approximately fifty million birds, a figure only surpassed by the loss of 145 million passenger pigeons; and

WHEREAS, with 200 million Americans living east of the Mississippi River, the concept of "balance in nature," as it relates to the wild bobwhite quail, is no longer applicable; and

WHEREAS, the abundant supply of pen-raised bobwhite quail keeps the general public from realizing the tragic plight of the wild bobwhite quail; and

WHEREAS, the wild bobwhite quail's mammalian nest predators, such as the raccoon, skunk, opossum, and armadillo, have seen their population numbers increase by as much as 2,500 percent because these animals are no longer trapped for food, fur, or other reasons, resulting in a bobwhite reproductive success rate well below what is necessary to sustain population levels; and

WHEREAS, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, codified as United States federal law, gives raptors unrestricted access to wild bobwhite quail, making no exception of non-migratory gamebirds; and

WHEREAS, although supplemental feeding has become a standard best management practice for wild bobwhite quail management, both promoting nutrition and reducing the bobwhite's exposure time to predators, it is not promoted in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a successful survival of the wild bobwhite quail does not compare to a successful survival of a rare fish in a stream; in a given 500-acre tract with adequate food supply, cover, and protection from predators, the wild bobwhite prospers, while on the other hand, a successful survival of a rare fish in a stream is many times more difficult; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the citizens of the State of Tennessee be both advised of the current status of the wild bobwhite quail and of the fact that efforts to truly establish and maintain a healthy wild bobwhite quail population on their property most likely will require some form of predation control.